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GRANDMA
AND
STANDARDITIS

... CASEY ...



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*Grandma and
Standarditis*





Grandma and Standarditis

BY

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"An Address to Teachers," Etc.

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PREFACE

"O wad some Power the giftie gie us
To see oursel's as ithers see us!
It wad frae mony a blunder free us
An' foolish notion;
What airs in dress an' gait would lea'e us,
An' ev'n devotion!"

—Robert Burns.

"Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream; but what am I?
An infant crying in the night;
An infant crying for the light;
And with no language but a cry."

—Tennyson.



FORETHOUGHTS

Like Grandma, the true teacher is the Salt of the Earth. She is not necessarily an octogenarian. When required, she is usually willing to state her exact age—if it be less than twenty-five,—and her approximate age if it be around forty. Further, the deponent sayeth not.

She is deserving of more than cold respect and captious criticism. She is entitled to a compensation commensurate with the noble work she is doing, for it is by far the most important work of the world. She is training the Child—our most precious possession. She is training our future judges, lawyers, doctors, ministers, diplomats, musicians, architects, laborers. She is shaping the lives and characters of twenty million boys and girls,—the future

fathers and mothers of this Republic. She is the Moulder of our Nation's Destiny.

Too often she is overworked and underpaid, and often her patient self-sacrifice goes unappreciated. Too often her position is insecure, and her salary insufficient for her actual needs; yet she goes about her work cheerfully, and, in proportion to her earnings, her contributions to charity, to the Church, and to the many public demands, compare quite favorably with those of our more often paged Society Leaders.

Too often her vacation is a nightmare—an anxious struggle to devise ways and means of existing for three months without an income. During these lean months every nickel must do double duty,—so she walks instead of riding; does her own laundry work, sewing, mending, patching, darning, cooking. She denies herself all luxuries and many actual

necessities, for she must read and study in order to keep abreast her profession. Its increasing demands exact fresh preparation for each coming school year.

“ She welcomes constructive criticism, but Alas! in these highly standardized times, criticism has become a disease against which preparation may avail her little; for, at the close of a particularly trying day, perhaps, she may be called to the office and confronted with her “Efficiency Score Card”,—a device of Satan, conceived by an Ex-Spurt, and scored by a Criticaster who perhaps could not teach her grade for a week without acquiring a case of “nerves” comparable to an acute attack of D. T.

But there is her Card — scored with Jove’s lightnings, circled periods, cat-stairs, cork-screws and section corners,—showing that she is lacking in “Efficiency”; the

“Tests” are unsatisfactory; her “Motivation” is suspected; her “Initiative” has the Rickets,—and so on, for sixty-five items; and can’t she do better.

After an hour of this inspiring and constructive toothache, she escapes from the refrigerator, frozen, humiliated, sick at heart and discouraged, to spend the night in tears.

But be of good cheer, dear Sister, the day of your deliverance is at hand. When next you are called before your critic, present him with a copy of this little book and insist that he read it. If it does not reform him, his case is hopeless, and we advise you to prepare yourself for a Domestic Science position. The male “Expert” always knows when and where to “head in.”

The Author.

Grandma and Standarditis

"Dangers stand thick through all the ground,
To push us to the Tomb,
While fierce diseases wait around,
To hurry mortals home."

How often have I heard dear old Grandma quote the above Quatrain,—which, by the way, does not happen to be from Omar.

Grandma never even heard of Omar; but even if she had, I feel quite sure that she never would have been interested in his grape-juice philosophy. She believed in the Book—"from cover to cover"—and Jeremiah was regarded by her as Chief of all the Prophets. His Lamentations were as sweet music to her ears, and seemed always to awaken a responsive chord in her sensitive heart. As she read them on

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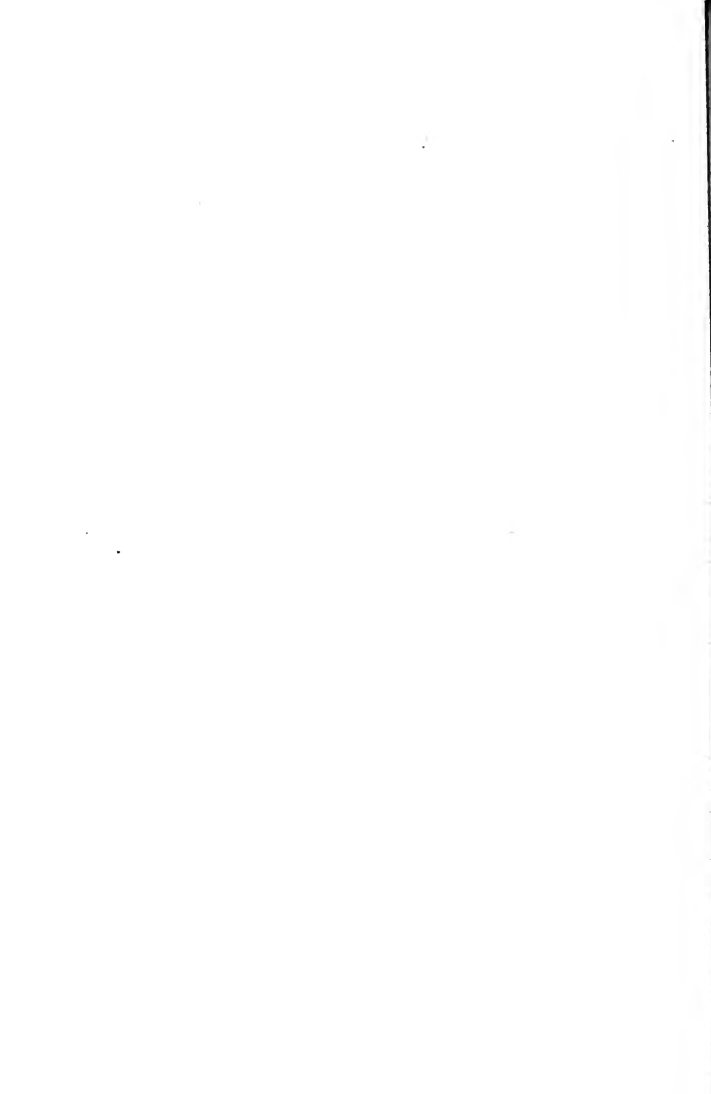
a Sunday afternoon they seemed a very Well-Spring of Joy to her, which sometimes bubbled up and overflowed in tears.

On one such occasion, in answer to my childish (and I trust sympathetic) inquiry as to the cause of her tears, she replied: "Don't mind my cryin', Honey; I always feel bad when I feel good, because then I know that I'm goin' to feel worse."

Grandma was descended from that good, old, hard-working, hard-praying Covenanter stock — now almost as extinct as the Dodo. It is possible therefore, that heredity may have been responsible for her seeming pessimism,—which, after all, was not really pessimism,—but only her way of expressing the joy of her heart. While ministering to the sick, or



"I always feel bad when I feel good."



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when busy managing the affairs of her own household, Grandma was far from being gloomy or pessimistic. On the contrary, at such times she seemed to radiate cheerfulness and optimism.

Children never regarded her as gloomy. Always they greeted her coming with shouts of delight, and welcomed her with kisses. These demonstrations of childish affection always seemed to stir her emotional heart, and on such occasions she was wont to exclaim—"I declare, honey, love is just the best, the biggest and sweetest thing in the world. It's the fulfillin' of the law; and when Grandma feels your little arms around her neck it's just like readin' Lamentations!"

Now, the children of Grandma's

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day were not standardized in their knowledge of scriptural allusions, and probably would not have been able to distinguish Lamentations from the Songs of Solomon, had they heard them on the King's Highway; yet all of them felt instinctively that this expression of Grandma's approval and love was the very highest compliment that could be bestowed upon them — whether by Queen, Prince, or Potentate. They recognized its hall-mark of sincerity; and each child felt as proud and satisfied as a full-blown dahlia.

Of course, all this sounds paradoxical; but,—to make use of a standardized, if somewhat trite, observation,—the world is full of paradoxes. Consider the hen,—she is not generally regarded as being musical; yet

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she often tries to express the Joy of Life thru a species of song.

And the roll and throb of the katydid orchestra may sound monotonous and tiresome to the unthinking; but it awakens beautiful thoughts in the poet's brain. It all depends upon one's interpretation.

Mrs. Cockerell's red sunflower is not less wonderful or beautiful because its border is sometimes tinged with yellow.

And the whippoorwill's song, as it comes to us thru the soft evening twilight, may sound a bit mournful; but the bird is not less interesting or useful on that account; and were it native to Europe, as it is to America, who knows if its oft-repeated note might not stir the allies to their supreme effort! * * * But we

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digress, and our digression is leading us into the swamps of Euro-Politico-Psychology. Let us return to Grandma.

Grandma lived in Illinois during pioneer days when the term Neighbor included all the settlers within a radius of fifty miles of her home. And as the settlement lacked a regular physician, she officiated as healer, accoucheuse, and surgeon, whenever and wherever her services were needed. She was a busy woman, but the distance was never too far, nor the hardship of travel too great for her to respond to the frequent S. O. S. call of the pioneer.

Now, Grandma was innocent of scientific lore, and had never been surveyed; and, judged by modern standards, was sadly lacking in Up-

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to-Date-ness; nevertheless, she possessed an ample fund of common sense and natural ability which enabled her to go industriously on her way, administering her boneset, jalap, and elecampane with astonishing success. It was her one modest boast that she never lost a patient if she reached him in time.

I am aware that this boast sounds singularly modern, but I assure you that Grandma originated it.

Firm in the Faith, kindly, helpful, industrious, she "went about doing good," and managed to crowd into the eighty-five brief years of her life more real work, more good deeds, and more worth-while results than many of us, I fear, can ever hope to accomplish or attain.

At her grave the people of four

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counties assembled, and did for her the last simple service which Love can render.

I was but a small lad at the time, and between then and now stretch more vanished years of life than I care to count, or think about; yet the occasion impressed my memory with two things—the sincere love of the people for Grandma, and the minister's text. It was Jeremiah 8:22.

Were I an expert psychologist, it would now be in order to speculate as to just how much our heredity and environment influence our pessimisms and optimisms; or to show beyond cavil, that the pessimist is a species of negative electric Corpuscle created to balance, as it were, the positive optimistic Visionary; and, therefore, that the one is as necessary

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and as useful as the other. For, while most of us may prefer "The Sweet Singer," the fact remains that the Book would be incomplete without Jeremiah.

But however interesting and profitable such speculations might prove, our limitations of time, and space, and expertness, compel us to leave them to Dr. Munsterberg, H. G. Wells,—and the would-be educational Samurai.

Wasn't it Aristotle who said that every complete action, or story, has a beginning, a middle, and an end?

To accord with these standards, our story ought to end with the passing of Grandma. Our sketch shows that she lived, did her work, and died. The temptation, therefore, to eliminate all else in the story is great. The

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Standards would not then be violated; and besides, the painter should quit when his picture is finished.

However, comes the querulous voice of that uneasy, captious, pessimistic Kill-Joy—the Editor:

“But, — my dear man, * * * the title! Wherefore ‘Grandma and Standarditis’? * * * I don’t quite see its appositeness. Why not simply ‘Grandma’? And what is Standarditis?”

Oh Fudge!

I almost wish the story had never been begun.

“Appositeness”!

I am sorry, but it is now too late to change the title. And I positively refuse to disturb Grandma. She is at Peace, so we will let her rest.

“Appositeness”!

Well, there seems no way out of the difficulty except to write a thesis on Standarditis. So *En avant*:

STANDARDITIS

Its Nature—

Standarditis is an insidious disease, now fast becoming epidemic in this country, but at present, more especially prevalent among school men.

While suffering from an attack of Standarditis, the patient manifests an all but irrepressible desire, or impulse, to scale, measure, weigh, compute, calculate, card-index, overhaul, score, inventory, enumerate, classify, schedule, invoice, evaluate, expatiate, recapitulate, graphize, analyze, terrorize, and otherwise Standardize human beings, teachers and school children.

Although the older authorities nowhere make mention of Standarditis,

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its earlier appearance probably dates from the First Crusades.

This seemingly inexcusable silence on the part of the authorities will not appear strange, however, if we stop to reflect that our Profession, at that time, was not far advanced in Medical Science. The sword and battle-axe were almost the only surgical instruments then known. There were few educational advantages, and almost no opportunities for study and Research. Printing had not been invented, and there were no scientific instruments of precision. The microscope did not come until centuries later; so that our brethren of the Crusades probably never even suspected the presence of microbes,—as we know them.

We, of the present day, however,

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are more highly favored. Thanks to that King of instruments, the Microscope, our Profession now knows the cause of many diseases—not least of which, is Standarditis.

It is a *Germ Disease*.

The germ which causes it has been isolated. It is now known to Science as the "*Bacillus-Geometricus-Scholasticus-Standarditicuss*." It is rod-shaped, and closely resembles the common garden measuring-worm.

The 'appositeness' of *its* title, at least, will be apparent to all.

In its nature, Standarditis is both *Cerebropathic* and *Neuropathic*. During the Prodromal Stage, it attacks both the brain and the nerve-centers, and in the acute form, may result in *Encephalitis*, or even *Ramollisement*.

A few Quacks contend that the

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disease is *Osteocephalic*, or *Osteopathic*; but this opinion is regarded with contempt by all Regular practitioners.

All the Authorities agree, however, that Standarditis is *contagious*,—in the sense that vice, for instance, or good example, is contagious. The rapid spread of the disease in America is proof positive that it is extremely contagious.

Standarditis is also *Psycho-Psychic*, or *Psycho-Mesmeric* in its nature. That is to say, it can be *willed*, or *wished* upon an individual, a group, or a nation, by one having the disease in its virulent form.

This fact makes it extremely insidious, hard to combat, and quite naturally is causing the Profession great uneasiness. Numerous instan-

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ces are of record where individuals have been infected through *Psycho-Psychic* Intention, while the case of Germany seems to establish proof that a nation can be thus infected.

In this connection, however, it is of interest to note that certain peoples seem to possess greater resisting power against Invasion, than others. The French and English, for example, seem to possess strong resisting power.

And while it appears that a nation may be easily invaded, it may, nevertheless, be slow to take the disease. It is considered extremely doubtful, for instance, whether Mexico can ever be standardized.

Natives of the Philippine Islands also strongly resist Standarditis,—which fact may perhaps account for

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their unpreparedness for self-government. In the year 1900 Congress appointed a committee to inquire into this matter, but the committee has not yet made its report.

It is also worthy of note, that when Standarditis invades a country, the official head of the government, army, or school, is almost invariably the first person to take the disease. Army officers are extremely susceptible to the disease, and once they are infected, it spreads by Psycho-Psychic Intention to the entire army.

School superintendents and heads of educational departments are super-susceptible. They seem to possess weak resisting power, yield readily to Invasion, and usually have the disease in its most virulent form.

Although not entirely immune

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from the disease, women are less susceptible than men. The reason for this is not well known.

History—

The earliest authentic account of this disease, as it now manifests itself, shows that it made its first appearance at Potsdam, Prussia, about the year 1870, where it prostrated the entire Royal Family. It is reported that the emperor never entirely recovered from the effects of the disease.

From the Royal Household it spread to the army officers, and through them by Psycho-Psychic Intention to the army; from thence to the homes, schools, churches, workshops, mills, mines, factories and fields. Not a man, woman, or child

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in the empire escaped the epidemic. Even the animals and fowls were affected by it.

Quarantine and other preventive measures against the disease were attempted by adjoining nations, but in most cases with indifferent success. It invaded parts of Austria-Hungary, Switzerland, France, Belgium, and Holland, but in these countries the disease was less virulent than in Germany.

The case of England is regarded as somewhat singular, and has caused much comment among the Profession. Since for four hundred years England had been constantly taking things, it was supposed that she would also take Standarditis. But owing, it is thought, to the well-known British Temperament which

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renders the Briton immune from foreign humors, England escaped infection. No Englishman has ever been known to take Standarditis.

Russia also suffered little,—probably owing to the Imperial Ukase and the well-known attitude of the Nobility.

Thus far, Turkey has proved to be immune.

America's commercial intercourse with Germany brought the disease to our own shores. The first cases were widely scattered among a few manufacturing concerns, and caused little comment at the time; but from these cases the disease spread until it is now reported in thirty-eight states.

Symptoms and Course—

The symptoms of Standarditis are

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usually so pronounced as to be easily recognized, even by the layman. Diagnosis, therefore, presents little or no difficulty. In the case of the Educator, the following symptoms are usually present, and may be said to be typical:

During Invasion, or Incubation of the disease, the patient exhibits restlessness, seems preoccupied, and more or less irritable; brow is wrinkled; eyes appear somewhat staring and glassy; pupils dilated; pulse rapid; tongue badly furred.

As the disease gains headway, the patient worries over trivial affairs; imagines that his schools are out of joint, and that the teachers and children are inefficient; feels impelled to do something, but wishes someone else to tell him what to do; sleep is

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broken by night-sweats, night-mares, and wild fancies; patient mutters during sleep, and is apt to repeat such words as 'Efficiency'—'Buenos-Aires-List'—'Courtesy-Tests'—'Heliograph Standards'—or 'Maryott Scores,' etc.

If these symptoms are present, the physician may feel certain that his patient is suffering from an attack of Standarditis. The disease has now passed Prodroma, and must run its course.

Doctor Lovejoy thus graphically describes the Course of the disease:

"While the patient is in the Prodromal Stage of Standarditis, it not unfrequently happens that the Board of Education has been infected through Psycho-Psychosis; and if so, it readily yields to the suggestion that an Efficiency Ex-Spurt be employed

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at public expense to Standardize the schools.

“Now, an Efficiency Ex-Spurt is a self-created, self-constituted, self-standardized individual, having the degree M.A., or Ph.D. He may even be entitled to a D. Ph. degree. He may never have taught successfully, but is willing, for a consideration, to survey schools, standardize them, and make Reports.

“In addition to having the symptoms already enumerated, an Ex-Spurt is also apt to suffer from calenture, delusions, hallucinations, hypochondriasis, and phrensy.

“He may even have ‘Enteralgia’.*

“Preliminary to the actual work of Survey, it was formerly the custom

** Standardized medical term—means plain belly-ache. —Ed.*

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to call a Principal before the Board, where he was interrogated by the Ex-Spurt; but this custom has been quite generally abandoned. One of the principals thus called, possibly proved to be an immune—as the following interview suggests:

“ ‘Mr. X, have you given the pupils of your school the Courtesy-Tests?’

“ ‘No.’

“ ‘Why haven’t you given them?’

“ ‘Well, I first tried them on myself, and failed to get much out of them. I then gave them to a committee consisting of three teachers, two Bankers, a Preacher, two Lawyers, a Public Accountant, and five College Professors. As they also failed, I thought it would be a waste of time to give them to my pupils.’

“ ‘You were wrong. You should

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give them to your pupils. There is no other way to Standardize a school.'

" 'Do you use the Thornwall Scores?'

" 'No; and for the same reasons already given. I submitted two sets of papers to the committee to grade by the Thornwall Scores. In the second set I included several papers of the first set, and found that the first and second gradings differed from thirty to fifty percent on the same paper. That is to say, the same person differed as much as fifty percent from his first marks when he graded the same paper a second time. I think the Scores are a waste of time.'

" 'What you tell us is very singular. Your committee could not have been very competent. All up-to-date

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schools are using these Scores. Have you given the Buenos-Aires-List, and are your pupils able to spell all the words?

“‘Yes; I have used that List occasionally. I think that the pupils can spell most of the words.’

“‘That is better; but you do not seem quite sure. Standarditis shows exactly how efficient our schools are. Have you used the Heliograph Scale?’

“‘No, I think that is perhaps the only one of the fifty-seven varieties I have not tried. But perhaps some others have been issued since school closed this afternoon.’

“‘And the McMurtie Standards and Maryott’s Score Cards,—do you use them in scoring the inefficiency of your teachers?’

“‘No, I have been too busy with

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the regular work of the schools. I take part in this work every day, and have tried to be helpful to my teachers by showing them how to teach. I have given friendly criticism when I thought it was needed, and have reported to the superintendent my opinion of their work.'

" 'I think that is all, Mr. X, thank you.'

"Mr. X is now excused;—makes his X-it, so to speak. (No apology. See Standardized Dictionary.) The following formula is now repeated:

" 'Gentlemen, you have invited me here to Standardize your schools. While I do not anticipate any particular opposition, I sometimes find that through ignorance, fear, timidity or misunderstanding, the fullest co-operation of the teachers is not

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always given. I trust that your superintendent will see to this. I shall refrain from comments until the Survey is finished, and embody my findings in my Report. My associates and I will be ready to begin next Monday.'

"Accordingly, on Monday, the Efficiency Expert and his corps of Assistants invade the school-rooms with their theoretical foot-rulers, tape-lines, yard-sticks, calipers, compasses, astrolabes, transits, Thorn-wall Scores, Heliograph Scales, Courtesy-Tests, Buenos-Aires-Lists, McMurtie Standards and Maryott's Score Cards, and proceed to Standardize the schools.

"Efficiency Engineers now race wildly up and down the aisles on their Efficiency-*Tricycles*,—running

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over pupils,—getting in each other's way, and in the way of the distracted teacher who vainly endeavors to maintain order and conduct her recitations; but for some unaccountable reason she fails to show her accustomed proficiency.

“During a period of time, ranging from two months to a year,—depending on the size of the city where the schools are being Standardized,—the Engineers measure everything in sight,—and much that isn't. They give Courtesy-Tests, Heliograph Standards, Beunos-Aires-Lists, McMurtie and Maryott Score-Cards, Brown's Tablets,—including Saint Vitus' Dance.

“They cover reams of paper with figures; arrange them in columns, groups, squads, companies, regi-



“ Including Saint Vitus Dance ”

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ments, brigades and divisions; they add them, cross-add them, subtract, multiply and divide them; regrind, and run them through the filter-press; then re-arrange them in geometrical progressions, extract their square roots, cube roots, tap-roots, near-variants, true variants, coefficients, medians, reduce them to decimals, percents and differentials.

“They march them echelon, grapevine, and lock-step; then re-arrange them in new groups for comparisons, calculations and computations; and then make graphs of them;—in-curves, out-curves, forward-passes, punts, fozzles, abscissae and abracadabrae.

“It would now seem as if the disease must have run its course and could go no further. But not so.

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"The patient insists on publishing the whole sorry nightmare in bulletin, or book form.

"This done, temperature decreases, rationality returns, the disease gradually subsides, and if the patient survives, he slowly recovers.

"His school is now Standardized."

Doctor Stoneage, who has also made an exhaustive study of the disease, observes that in its nature, Standarditis is somewhat analogous to the Foot-and-Mouth Disease among cattle—since it has to do with foot-rule measurements, and causes the patient to talk and write abnormally.

This suggestion of the learned Doctor's opens up a rich field of study and Research for the Psycho-Therapist and Psychologist, and we

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shall confidently expect some new discoveries to be made in this field in the near future. It would be interesting to know, for instance, whether this disease is accountable for the Congressional Record, the War news, or for some of our recent books on Education.

We have thus traced the disease from its origin in the dark Ages down to the present time. We have shown its Nature, its Cause, its History, its Symptoms, and its usual Course. It now remains to speak briefly of its Effects.

Its Effects—

The effects of Standarditis vary greatly among individuals and nations, and seem to be influenced, somewhat, by the different occupa-

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tions of the people. Many of these effects are droll; some are weird and fantastic, while others are serious and melancholy.

The learned Doctor Knochenkopf, in his well-known Medical Work entitled: "*Geistesstörungen und Militärnervenheilstätte infolge von chronischens Standarditissmus, und ihren Einfluss auf die Felddienstfähigkeit,*" gives the following interesting and remarkable account of Standarditis in Germany.

"While strolling through one of the city parks the Emperor was suddenly stricken with Standarditis. His attention was attracted to a flock of geese on their way to the lake for a swim. They were led by a militant, battle-scarred gander, at whose signal the geese halted, left-faced toward

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his Majesty, flapped their wings and fiercely screamed forth their War-Cry,—“Honk! Honk!”—right-faced, and continued on their way,—single column, regular interval, heads up, chests out,—their blue eyes sparkling like Dresden china.

“His Majesty was astonished and vastly pleased. The maneuver was perfectly executed, the salute soldierly, and the ‘Honk,’—as everybody knows, is Goose-Latin for ‘Hoch!’

“The Emperor ordered the veteran leader brought before him, decorated him with the Double-Cross and Order of the Gridiron, and gave command that the whole army should adopt the ‘Goose-Step,’—now peculiar to our German soldiery.

“The effects of this ‘Goose-Step’ upon our men is very noticeable, and

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the sight of so much drill is influencing even our women and girls. Recently, while in Frankfurt, I met Frau Z and her estimable daughters who were out for a walk in the park. They all marched in double column, and all with the 'Goose-Step.' Peasants, coming home from their work in the fields all walk with 'Goose-Step,' the woman usually in the lead, with a large basket, or a sack of potatoes balanced on her head. This setting-up,—or rather standing up—exercise, gives to the peasantry an erect carriage, and wonderfully increases their health, strength, usefulness and general efficiency."

The learned Doctor's observation concerning usefulness and efficiency suggests that we, on this side of the water, have much to learn from our



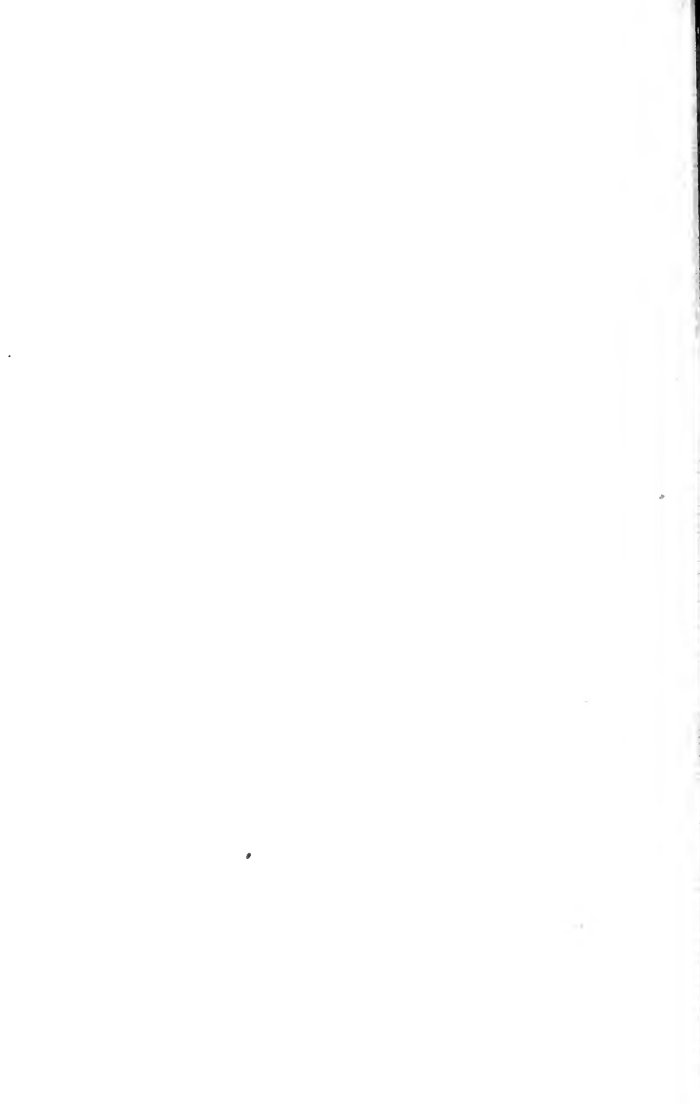
“The Goose-step.”



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over-seas friends. Doubtless when we have become well Standardized, we will have adopted many of their useful and efficient customs.

This celebrated 'Goose-Step' was the beginning of Standarditis in Germany. The National Step once established, Standardization of everything else quickly followed. It extended to the width of streets, the height of houses, government, people, homes, churches, schools, factories, farms, clothing, wine, water, wiener-wurst, beer, obedience, conduct, thought, customs, manners, Class-distinctions, railroads, tunnels, roads, bridges, cannon, cheese, taxes, tooth-picks and coffins. Nothing is forgotten. All is measured, weighed, evaluated, tested, classified and in-



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ient for the merchant who measures a yard of ribbon, or for the officer who is laying out a trench on the firing line.

The result of all this is supposed to be increased efficiency. The people become careful, methodical, exact and painstaking. They regulate the prices of commodities, wages and labor. All have work, and time in which to do their work. They like this Kultur. They are proud of their achievements, for these make their nation unique among nations. Moreover, it makes easy the rule of the Militarists, who, quite naturally, desire to extend this beneficence and Kultur to other unstandardized nations, even though it may require cannon shrapnel and Zeppelins to carry the good tidings.

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The effect of Standarditis upon superintendents has already been described. The effect upon the schools can only be surmised. Unfortunately, the testimony upon this important phase of the subject is too limited to justify our coming to any definite conclusion. It is true that we have tons of literature from the Surveyors, but almost no testimony from teachers whose schools have been surveyed and Standardized.

When a laundress is importuned to buy a new brand of soap, she quite naturally wishes to know whether the brand recommended is better than the one she uses. She regards the testimony of her neighbor, Mrs. Murphy, as more satisfactory upon this point than that of the grocer. This is common business prudence,

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for she doesn't wish to spoil her linen, nor to have to do her work a second time.

Having recently received a hint from the Health Officer to "clean up", we inquired of Mrs. Murphy and the neighbors their opinion concerning the efficacy of Standardized Soap.

Twenty letters were written to teachers whose schools had passed through a siege of Standarditis, requesting definite information of its good effects. With singular unanimity the replies expressed joy that the measles had come and gone.

Only ten replies were received, and only one of these was in printed form,—"*The Reply of the Superintendents of New York City*" to the New York School Inquiry. It is a

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pamphlet of 116 pages, giving the opinions of nineteen out of twenty-three District Superintendents concerning the New York School Survey. It discusses the methods and findings of the Engineers, and gives us a sort of Survey of the Surveyors. The last paragraph sums up the discussion as follows:

“* * * Therefore the net result of the whole inquiry with reference to the teaching and supervision of elementary schools is a set of opinions backed by guesses and assumptions.”—

Which seems to have the merit of frankness, even if it does sound sacrilegious.

But perhaps the good results have not yet had time to become apparent. I once heard a superintendent of long

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experience say that the best evidences of good teaching appear about twenty years after the pupils leave school. But this was before the day of Standarditis, when "All things are become new." However, a few of our schools have been Standardized for ten years, or more, which would seem to be sufficient time for the seed to have sprouted. But perhaps we are dealing with a Century Plant.

Reports of the Surveys present little that is new, or that has not been tried many times. For more than fifty years superintendents have classified and re-classified their schools. They have inspected methods of teaching, offered criticisms, and have given constructive help. They have known that in every grade there are retarded children, and have pro-

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vided extra help for such. They have conducted teachers' institutes, held teachers' meetings, attended teachers' conventions, established reading circles, made reports to the boards of education, have sought, and have given, new ideas concerning educational work. For fifty years the taxpayers have known annually what their schools have cost. These things are not new because they are now discussed in Standardized language.

What the superintendent would *like* to know is, how to improve the already known conditions without bankrupting his district. He would like to know how to eliminate poverty, so that boys and girls might attend school regularly. He would like to know a sure tonic for weak memory,—one that will enable pupils

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to remember what they are taught. He would like to know the really Royal Road to the multiplication table and other fundamentals,—the road that eliminates drill and thus saves time. He would like to know some surer, quicker method of helping his pupils to grow more honest, upright, loyal, industrious and dependable, day by day. He would like to know the best method of training the child, so that when it leaves school it shall be able to make the most of its life. And he would like to know how to do this without regarding the child as an insensate piece of machinery to be speeded up by some new Test-Pulley. The scrap-pile is full of such devices.

Perhaps we are asking impossibilities. Perhaps these things can never be accomplished. Perhaps it would

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be necessary to regenerate humanity in order to "Mould it nearer to our heart's desire." But nevertheless, these things are vital because they are fundamental. They are the things about which teachers are thinking. They are the things they would like to know; and they will welcome any sane means of accomplishing them.

Somebody has observed that we are multi-millionaires in criticism, but paupers in helpfulness. There is more than a grain of truth in the observation. All of us are expert critics, but few of us are critically helpful. Too often we find fault without helping to correct the fault. Sometimes we imagine that we have given help when we have only complicated the situation by pattering some of our Utopian theories; and

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when these theories are the results of Standarditis, they are apt to be fanciful in the extreme.

Although the effects of Standarditis on the schools may be in doubt, there is no doubt whatever concerning their effects on the Taxpayer. In his case they vary all the way from \$3,000 to \$90,000, depending on the size of the city where the schools have been Standardized. These are current market prices for Standardization; and while they may seem rather high, we must remember that we are living in War times, when the price of everything is likely to be inflated.

But let us not be discouraged, and above all, let us not grow pessimistic. It is often worth the price to be able "To see ourselves as others see us."

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It harms no one to look into a mirror occasionally, provided the mirror reflects one's true image,—and vanity does not prompt the inspection.

While it does not seem probable, there may be diseases that are worse than Standarditis; — Complacency, for example, or Blindness. So that it might be profitable for us to test our eyes, occasionally, with standardized glasses; else we might fail to measure up even to ordinary standards of efficiency.

We should remember that, although Conservatism may succeed in holding the ground already occupied, it seldom captures any new trenches. Let us, then, be ever honestly open to conviction of our sins, whether they be committed through ignorance, or through deliberate Expertness.

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Another one of Grandma's Quatrains keeps ringing through the deep caves of thought, and seems an appropriate ending—

"May we this life improve,
By earnest prayers and fasts,
And do our best to give each Test,
While Standarditis lasts."



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ADDENDUM

The Cure—

Standarditis is generally thought by the Profession to be incurable; but recently, while going through Grandma's papers, I found one of her "receipts" which she used with great success in treating her patients, and which she guarantees will scatter and destroy an army of Microbes, if directions are faithfully followed. I have tried to render it in Standardized language for the Profession:

R

Pil: Hydrarg: Chlor:

Sig:

singul: nocte sumend:

Decoc: Aloes Sig: ̄j
omni mane.



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